



Re: Testimony of Margaret M. Generali in support of SB 186 An Act Concerning School Counselors

Education Committee- February 26, 2018

Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Margaret Generali. I am a counselor educator at Southern Connecticut State University, past public school counselor and member of the Connecticut School Counselor Association. Please accept this letter as an indication of my support for Senate Bill 186-An Act Concerning School Counselors.

Currently, the state statutes only refer to counseling professionals in schools as “guidance counselors” yet across the profession nationally (American School Counselor Association), the term “school counselor” has been adopted. This adoption is related to the changing role of counselors who work in public schools. The role of the school counselor has changed over time to meet the needs of our public-school students. Historically guidance counselors focused primarily on supporting students with college and career exploration. As the needs of students have changed, so have the roles of our school based counselors. Over time, school counselors have become essential in supporting needs not only related to career and college readiness but related to the social emotional needs of students. School counselors plan and present school wide interventions to meet the needs of the entire student population. In addition, school counselors provide essential services at the primary prevention and intervention levels.

School counseling programming is planned in response to the needs of our students. In fact, a comprehensive program will provide students with the skills that they need to be successful in school, addressing social emotional, career and academic domains. School counselors provide a comprehensive range of lessons, interventions and techniques to support student success. At the Master’s degree level, school counselors receive training commensurate with licensed clinical mental health counselors in terms of rigor and duration, including 60 credit hours of graduate coursework. Thus, the title “school counselor” more closely aligns the two related professions.

In closing, I ask that you amend the underlying bill to include the Connecticut School Counselor Association proposal: to have the State Board of Education add the title school counselor to the statute and adopt guidelines and recommendations for a comprehensive school counseling program within K-12 public schools.

The language states:

*The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Connecticut School Counselor Association, shall adopt guidelines and*

*recommendations to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive school counseling programing. Such recommendations shall ensure that academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary and career readiness programming is delivered by a certified school counselor with adequate training. The State Board of Education shall make any such guidelines and recommendations available to local and regional boards of education.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "M. Generali".

Margaret M. Generali, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, School Counseling Program

Chair, Department of Counseling and School Psychology